

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2440

S E C R E F T S L A G O S 8190

FOR DICK MOOSE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: RH, NI

SUBJECT: RHODESIA

REF: STATE 170042

1. ALTHOUGH THEY COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO TRUMPET THEIR APPROVAL, THE FMG SUPPORTS THE ANGLO-AMERICAN INITIATIVE IN RHODESIA PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE USG IS INVOLVED. THEIR SUPPORT IS NOT RPT NOT THE PRODUCT OF ANY SERIOUS STUDY OF THE PROBLEM OR ANY IN-DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THE ANGLO-AMERICAN INITIATIVE CONSISTS OF. BUT THE FMG HAS FIRMLY BELIEVED, DESPITE PUBLIC RHETORIC IN SUPPORT OF ARMED STRUGGLE, THAT A NON-VIOLENT SOLUTION IS ESSENTIAL TO PROTECT THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISABLE MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY IN FUTURE. THEY HAVE THEREFORE APPLAUDED THE US ROLE AND WISHED THE INITIATIVE WELL.

2. THE ANGLO-AMERICAN INITIATIVE HAS BEEN INTERPRETED AS AN INDICATION

OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENTS TO FINDING A LASTING SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. WHEREAS A YEAR AGO THERE WAS AUTOMATIC NIGERIAN SKEPTICISM OF THE CREDIBILITY AND BONA FIDES OF ANYTHING KISSINGER TRIED IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, NOW WE GET THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT RATHER THAN THE ONUS OF IT. US INVOLVEMENT IS ALSO REGARDED AS WELCOME DEMONSTRATION OF NEW

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US PERSPECTIVE ON AFRICA AND THE THIRD WORLD IN GENERAL.

3. FMG IS MORE SCORNFUL OF THE BRITISH ROLE IN THIS INITIATIVE THAN THE BRITISH DESERVE. THE FMG BELIEVES THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS UNABLE AND UNWILLING TO FORCE SMITH TO AGREE TO A SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO AFRICANS. NIGERIAN MISTRUST OF THE BRITISH DETERMINATION TO PRODUCE A SOLUTION IS ROOTED IN BRITISH FAILURE

OVER THE LAST ELEVEN AND ONE-HALF YEARS TO PERSUADE SMITH TO ACCEPT MAJORITY RULE. IN THE NIGERIAN VIEW, THE INSIGNIFICANT TRANSFER OF BRITISH CAPITAL TO NIGERIA AND OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN CONTRAST TO BRITISH INVESTMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA IS PROOF OF BRITISH PERFDY.

4. DESPITE ITS SUPPORT OF THE ANGLO AMERICAN INITIATIVE, THE FMG NOW BELIEVES IT IS DOOMED TO FAILURE. IN THE FACE OF SMITH'S MOST RECENT DISPLAY OF INTRANSIGENCE, THE FMG WILL RELUCTANTLY CONCLUDE THAT ONLY CONCERTED GUERRILLA ACTIVITY WILL TOPPLE THE SMITH GOVERNMENT. NIGERIANS HAVE CONSISTENTLY OVERSIMPLIFIED THE PROBLEM IN TERMS OF "GETTING RID OF SMITH." THEY ARE ILL-INFORMED ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVES SHOULD BE DISAPPEAR, BUT THEY ARE PREPARED TO BELIEVE THAT THE DEVIL YOU DON'T KNOW MUST CERTAINLY BE LESS BAD. THEY WILL SQUARE THEIR SUPPORT OF VIOLENCE WITH THEIR PREFERENCE FOR PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS BY ARGUING - WITHOUT MANY FACTS AT THEIR DISPOSAL AND WITHOUT RESEARCH - THAT IT NEED NOT TAKE ALL THAT LONG TO TOPPLE SMITH.

5. THE FMG IS AMBIVALENT IN ITS ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE VARIOUS RHODESIAN LIBERATION GROUPS. ALTHOUGH IT WENT ALONG WITH OAU RECOGNITION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, BELIEVING THAT THE FRONT ALONE POSSESSES SUFFICIENT MILITARY STRENGTH TO CONFRONT THE SMITH REGIME AND THAT THE FRONT THEREFORE DESERVED RECOGNITION, IT IS NOT COMFORTABLE WITH THIS POSITION AND WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO RESERVE ITS OPTIONS TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE OTHER TWO FACTIONS
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AS WELL. THE FMG FEARS THAT AN ANGOLAN TYPE CIVIL WAR COULD BREAK OUT IN RHODESIA AND RECOGNIZES THAT SUCH AN OCCURENCE WILL BENEFIT NO ONE EXCEPT POSSIBLY THE SOVIETS. THE RECENT RETURN TO RHODESIA OF SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA HAS INCREASED NIGERIAN SUSPICIONS THAT ONE OR BOTH OF THEM WILL ENTER INTO A PACT WITH SMITH WHICH WOULD SPIKE VORSTER'S PRESSURES ON SMITH AND WHICH THEN THE WEST MIGHT HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE TO ACCEPTING AS FAID ACCOMPLI.

6. SOME SEGMENTS OF THE FMG BELIEVE THAT THE USG MIGHT BE BETTER ADVISED TO CONCENTRATE OUR EFFORTS ON FORCING VORSTER TO ACCEPT AN INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA RATHER THAN CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS IN RHODESIA. SOME SENIOR FMG OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT OUR LEVERAGE OVER VORSTER IS GREATER THAN OVER SMITH.

7. FMG SUPPORT TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO BE LIMITED TO FINANCIAL AND MATERIEL ASSISTANCE. THE FMG HAS NO PLANS TO DEPLOY TROOPS TO SOUTHERN AFRICA EITHER TO BOLSTER THE DEFENSE FORCES OF ZAMBIA AND MOZAMBIQUE, OR TO TRAIN FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN MOZAMBIQUE AND TANZANIA, OR TO CONTRIBUTE TO A PEACE-KEEPING FORCE (SEE LAGOS 7809 FOR GARBA'S COMMENTS TEN DAYS AGO TO UK HIGH COMMISSIONERS RE PEACE-KEEPING). THE FMG MIGHT TRAIN NATIONALIST IN NIGERIA, COORDINATING THEIR TRAINING AND PROVISION

OF EQUIPMENT WITH OTHER DONOR NATIONS. THE RECENT DEPLOYMENT OF TWO NIGERIAN AIRFORCE C-130 AIRCRAFT TO TANZANIA TO FERRY EQUIPMENT AND TROOPS TO MOZAMBIQUE WILL PROBABLY BE FOLLOWED UP BY SIMILAR ACTIONS WHICH WILL ENABLE THE FMG TO FEEL THAT IT IS PLAYING AN ACTIVIST ROLE AND YET WILL PROTECT IT FROM BECOMING TOO DEEPLY INVOLVED IN A SITUATION WHICH NIGERIA DOES NOT FULL UNDERSTAND.

8. AS YOU WILL HAVE RECOGNIZED FROM THE LENGTH AND ELOQUENCE OF THE FOREGOING, IT IS EASIER TO DESCRIBE NIGERIAN ATTITUDES ON THE PROBLEM THAN TO PROPOSE USEFUL SUGGESTIONS OF MY OWN. I RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PEACE-KEEPING MECHANISM BUT UNDERSTAND THE RELUCTANCE OF APPARENTLY EVERYONE TO CONTRIBUTE TO A FORCE THAT WOULD OPERATE IN UNDETERMINED WAYS IN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT NO ONE CAN NOW DIVINE. IF WE COULD RESTRAIN THE SOUTH AFRICANS AND THE
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CUBANS FROM SENDING TROOPS, AND IF WE COULD CONTAIN THE HAWKS IN OUR OWN SOCIETY, IS IT REALLY UNTHINKABLE TO LET THE NATIONALISTS AND THE SMITH FORCES HAVE AT IT? HOW LONG WOULD THE DESTRUCTION REALLY GO ON BEFORE SOME SORT OF BASIC CHANGE WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE ENVIRONMENT THAT MIGHT RENDER NEGOTIATIONS ONCE AGAIN FEASIBLE? NEED WE ACCEPT THE TIRED SYNDROME OF "INEVITABLE GREAT POWER INVOLVEMENT?" IS IT NOT INEVITABLE ONLY IF WE MAKE IT SO?

9. YOU NEED YOUR OWN DENNIS GRENNON. GOOD LUCK.
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